

# RECOGNIZING GUN VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. EDWARDS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Georgia (Mrs. MCBATH) for 30 minutes.

## GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. MCBATH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the topic of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

Mrs. MCBATH. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to host tonight's Special Order 30 minutes with the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force and Assistant Leader NEGUSE.

We are entering the final week of Gun Violence Awareness Month. On this 25th day of June, it is estimated that over 2,500 Americans have lost their lives due to gun violence in this month alone. Over 100 people are dying in this country every single day.

Back in my home State of Georgia, I have seen the compounding impact of gun violence in our communities. Earlier this month, there was a shooting at the Peachtree Center mall where a gunman shot and injured three people. Just hours later, a man who was interviewed by local news as a witness to the first shooting went on to commit an act of gun violence himself, hijacking a Gwinnett County bus and fatally shooting a passenger that very same day.

I don't know what anybody else thinks, but this epidemic is truly real. I know firsthand the pain of losing a loved one to senseless gun violence. It has been nearly 12 years now since I lost my son, Jordan, when he was just 17 years old.

On Black Friday in 2012, Jordan and his friends were simply going out shopping at the mall. They stopped at a convenience store gas station for all of 3½ minutes because my son, Jordan, said: Hey, guys, if we are going to pick up girls at the mall, you have to have fresh breath.

In those 3½ minutes, a man pulled up next to the boys in their car, and he started complaining about the loud music that they were playing. He racially profiled them, called them gang bangers. He called them thugs.

Then, he fired 10 shots into the car, killing my only son, and then he simply drove away. He acted as if nothing had ever happened.

He went back to his hotel with his girlfriend. They walked their puppy, Charlie. They ordered a pizza, and they made themselves a couple of stiff rum and Cokes. Then, they simply went to bed.

It was only the next morning that they saw on television that a young

Black male had been killed by 10 bullets at a convenience store gas station. This man and his girlfriend just simply got in their car and drove 170 miles back to Satellite Beach, Florida.

During the trial of my son's killer, I made a promise that I would spend the rest of my life fighting to make sure that no one else ever had to experience the pain and trauma that not only my family has experienced but the ever-growing club of people in this country who are succumbing to it every single day, parents who are burying their children who have been taken from this Earth far too early.

I became an advocate for gun safety. I became a spokesperson for Everytown for Gun Safety in America. In a district that was once held by Newt Gingrich, I ran for Congress strictly on a platform of gun safety and to save as many lives in this country as I possibly could. Against all odds, I won.

In the 5 years since I have come to Congress, the House Democratic Caucus has truly become the gun safety caucus. That truly gives me hope because I never ever thought I would be here. I never ever thought I would be standing on this floor. I never ever thought I would be here in Congress, living out my son's legacy as we pass as many bills as we can to stop more families from feeling the same pain that I felt from losing a child to unnecessary and horrific gun violence in America.

It is a testament to leaders like our Gun Violence Prevention Task Force chairman, MIKE THOMPSON, that we are able to celebrate these victories, these monumental accomplishments, and the remarkable change that has happened just within the last few years.

Today marks 2 years of major gun safety reform with the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, led by our gun sense House Democratic Caucus and President Biden, with parts of my red flag bill, with community intervention funding, and with mental health resources for all 50 States, solutions that the American people overwhelmingly have been crying out for and support.

We are building on that monumental progress every single day with the assault weapons ban and also the introduction of my bipartisan GOSAFE Act to keep weapons of war off of American streets and out of our schools.

With the introduction of new legislation and movement forward on discharge petitions to force votes on these very important bills, we, the gun sense Democratic Caucus, are working to protect the American people every single day. Even if the current majority doesn't want to stand up for the safety of their own constituents and their families, we are committed. We will do that because the American people deserve to live in their communities in this country safely and freely.

Tonight, we will hear from legislators. Many of these legislators are some of the most dedicated Members on this Hill who are making this kind

of progress possible every single day. They do this work day in and day out, leaders who have elevated the profile of gun violence prevention in the Halls of this Congress and many who championed this issue long before they were ever even considered an elected official.

This work takes all of us. That is why I am so grateful for this evening's speakers who are here with us tonight who will focus on our energy and the work that we have done during Gun Violence Prevention Awareness Month and hope that we can continue to encourage people to rededicate ourselves to the work of saving lives.

I have never been more optimistic about the future of this movement, and that is because of the work that I am blessed and privileged to do with my colleagues in this Chamber. Together, truly, we are definitely making a difference.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. NEGUSE), our assistant Democratic leader.

Mr. NEGUSE. Mr. Speaker, first, I thank my friends and Gun Violence Prevention Task Force leaders, Congresswoman LUCY MCBATH and Congressman MIKE THOMPSON, for convening us this evening. They both have been unwavering in their dedication to ending the scourge of gun violence in this country.

I want to take a moment in particular to salute and applaud my friend Representative MCBATH, who, as you heard, Mr. Speaker, has shown a remarkable amount of courage, bravery, and tenacity in converting her anguish, unspeakable, unthinkable anguish, into action to save lives. We couldn't be more proud of her and the work that she has done since she first graced the Halls of this august body and made ending gun violence a priority of not just hers but of this House.

Mr. Speaker, in a country where gun violence is the leading cause of death among children—I will repeat that just to let it sink in, gun violence is the leading cause of death among children in the United States—it comes as no surprise that, today, the Surgeon General declared that gun violence in America now constitutes a public health crisis.

□ 2030

My district, Mr. Speaker, has been acutely impacted by that crisis, by the pain of the gun violence epidemic.

A gunman, 3 years ago, walked into a local grocery store in my community in Boulder, Colorado. He killed, murdered in cold blood, ten of our beloved community members, including a police officer, who made the ultimate sacrifice, saved lives, died in the line of duty. This tragedy and the shock waves that it has spurred across my State serve as a reminder of why we as a Congress cannot abandon our mission to end this epidemic.

My community, Mr. Speaker, is not alone. From Uvalde to Buffalo, from

Parkland to Sandy Hook, to every corner of our country, there are communities just like ours with families devastated by the pain and anguish caused by gun violence and Members, as you have heard, of this very Chamber who have experienced devastating loss as a result of this epidemic. It is with those we have lost in our hearts and at the forefront of our minds that we remain committed to ensuring that we turn such anguish into action.

As mentioned, Mr. Speaker, 2 years ago today, many of us joined President Biden at the White House. I remember going to the White House with my colleague Representative MCBATH, to celebrate the enactment of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, which Representative MCBATH, Representative ROBIN KELLY, Representative STEVEN HORSFORD, so many of the leaders from whom will be heard from tonight, along with Representative HALEY STEVENS and others, have worked vociferously to get across the finish line. This bill is the most significant and consequential gun violence prevention legislation that we have seen in decades.

Through this bill, we were able to enact improved and enhanced background checks, protect domestic violence survivors, expand community violence intervention programs, and support improved mental health services across the country. Mr. Speaker, we know that legislating works.

I am here today with leaders, like Representative KENNEDY of Buffalo, Representative MANNING from North Carolina, Representative STEVENS, and Representative MCBATH, and so many others to repeat the call that House Democrats have made time and time again, to say that we are ready to work in good faith with anyone to address what is clearly a pervasive problem across our country, to advance commonsense reforms that we know will save lives. It is time for our colleagues on the other side of the aisle, House Republicans, to do the same, to work with us because inaction is no longer an option.

Again, I thank Representative MCBATH, Representative THOMPSON, and the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force for their work in addressing our most basic charge as Members of this body, which is to keep Americans safe.

Mrs. MCBATH. Mr. Speaker, I thank Assistant Democratic Leader JOE NEGUSE for his wonderful words.

At this time, I yield to Representative HALEY STEVENS of Michigan.

Ms. STEVENS. Mr. Speaker, I thank this Chamber that affords the time for this special hour. It is a profound and deep honor to stand here with my friend, who I am also privileged to call one of my heroes, Congresswoman LUCY MCBATH, who I came into this very Chamber with as new freshmen, the class of 2018. Most of us never ever had run for office, and we took on a new House majority in a very challenging time for this country.

I have seen her work day in and day out. It doesn't matter if it is Gun Violence

Prevention Month. While I never got to meet her son, Jordan, and his fate is certainly why I know his mother, I know his soul, and I know his spirit because his mother has channeled it into good and into change and into togetherness for this Nation of ours.

Mr. Speaker, I also stand here as a Representative of Michigan, and we are coming out of a very tough week in Oakland County. About 10 days ago, we had a shooting incident at a splash park on a Saturday, the day before Father's Day, with nine injured parents shielding their infant children, a grandfather, an 8-year-old shot in the head and still is in the hospital. This was followed by another horrific scene the next Saturday; an Oakland County deputy sheriff was shot while investigating a crime in Detroit.

Time and time again, we see these incidences. We see these horrific mass shootings. I have, as a lawmaker and as a policymaker and someone who has stood by President Biden, who has stood by my colleagues on getting so much done, remain absolutely baffled by these statistics, by these events, that just seemingly and uniquely happen in a country where we refuse to change our laws, where we continue on this path of insanity.

There is too much pain. There are too many mass shootings. I invite everyone to 2411, my office in Rayburn, outside of my office door, where I have the orange ribbon for every mass shooting that has happened this term in Congress. We are over 800.

I remember calling Congressman NEGUSE when the mass shooting happened in his grocery store in his district. I remember the mass shooting in Buffalo and how personal that has felt. Again, another grocery store. We are arming hate in the United States of America, and we are arming insanity. Yes, those of us on this side of the aisle are talking about common sense, and we all have a responsibility to the next generation.

Our first Generation Z Member of Congress, MAXWELL FROST, has been carrying the torch of gun violence prevention through his activism work before he entered this very Chamber. When are we going to double down on passing commonsense gun safety legislation? When are we going to say that the right to bear arms is a privilege in the United States of America?

Our U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Vivek Murthy, just proclaimed gun violence as a public health crisis, and that is what it is, at parties and in grocery stores and in houses of worship.

We are in a grand competition on the global stage. I have been so honored this term to work on the U.S. House Select Committee on the Strategic Competition between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party. We need to look ourselves in the face, and we need to show that democracy works, and it works when we pass laws. It works when we regulate.

It works when we institute training programs and check-ins and red flag

laws and when our prosecutors prosecute, like our Oakland County prosecutor did in Oakland County, Michigan, the parents who don't utilize safe storage.

Your right is a privilege, and our right to live freely, safely, and peacefully deeply matters, even outside of the month of June, where we say wear orange and stand for gun safety and gun violence prevention. This is something we can all rally around and do, just as we did 2 years ago almost on this very day, when we passed a bipartisan gun safety law. That was a good start, but there is more to do because these mass shootings and these shooting deaths of innocent children and people continue to happen in the United States of America.

Anyone who walks through the door to my office will see those orange ribbons and is invited into the conversation and the solution making that we need.

Mrs. MCBATH. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and colleague from Michigan, Ms. STEVENS, for her comments.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to KATHY MANNING of North Carolina.

Ms. MANNING. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend, Representative LUCY MCBATH, for her courage and her persistence in taking a mother's unbearable pain following the loss of her son, Jordan, and turning that pain into a relentless effort to do everything possible to pass bills that will chip away at this terrible problem.

Thankfully, 2 years ago, under President Biden's leadership, we helped pass the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act. It was historic legislation to address gun violence and keep weapons out of dangerous hands. It was a strong step forward, but we can, and we must do much, much more.

Right now, guns are the leading cause of death for children and teens in the United States. Our Surgeon General just declared the gun violence in this country a public health crisis. We all know he is right because, every day, more than 100 Americans lose their lives to gun violence.

As an active member of the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force, I have talked with my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. I have presented the majority with a list of ten things we could consider doing together and asked Republican Members which of these things would my colleagues be willing to work with us on?

One of my colleagues from North Carolina said to me: We don't have a gun problem. We have a mental health problem.

Well, there are mental health problems in countries all over the world, but they do not have the same level of gun violence that we have because guns are not as widely available.

In my own community, when I meet with local police officers, community leaders, parents, mental health professionals, and educators, they all tell me the same thing. We have got to do

more to stop this devastating scourge of gun violence. This is killing our children and our parents. It is robbing people of their loved ones and leaving families of victims devastated, with a grief and a gaping loss that can never be repaired.

In my district, North Carolina's Sixth Congressional District, we lost one of our best, most dedicated law enforcement officers to gun violence in the past year. Sergeant Dale Nix, a real hero who devoted his life to helping victims of domestic violence. Our whole community continues to mourn his loss.

As an active member of the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force, I urge my colleagues to work with us on things that the vast majority of Americans agree on: Universal background checks, safe storage laws, community and violence intervention programs. We are ready to work with the majority. Please work with us to do the right thing for our children and our future.

Mrs. MCBATH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from North Carolina for her comments.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to one of our newest Members of the Democratic Caucus, Mr. TIM KENNEDY of New York.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representatives MIKE THOMPSON and LUCY MCBATH and Assistant Leader JOE NEGUSE, along with the rest of the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force for organizing this important Special Order.

I especially thank Representative MCBATH, not only for her leadership, but for sharing her extremely personal and heartbreaking story. It is inspiring to see Representative MCBATH turn her grief into action to help save lives in this country. I am honored to stand by her side.

□ 2045

Mr. Speaker, gun violence is an epidemic in our country, one that requires a national response.

In May 2022, a racist, domestic terrorist opened fire in the Tops Supermarket on Jefferson Avenue in Buffalo, in the heart of our community, stealing the lives of 10 innocent souls and severely wounding 3 others.

Just last Friday, a beautiful 3-year-old boy, Ramone L. Carter, was riding his tricycle when he was struck and killed by a bullet. His older sister, Jamia Griffin, age 7, was also grazed and hospitalized. Our community has rallied around Ramone and Jamia's family, but we know that no amount of support can undo the pain and unspeakable anguish that they feel.

That same day, in Fordyce, Alabama, a gunman opened fire with a shotgun at another grocery store, claiming the lives of four people and wounding nine, including two law enforcement officers.

Grocery store patrons and employees being slaughtered. Children and toddlers being murdered. Police being shot. It cannot continue.

This week, the U.S. Surgeon General declared gun violence a public health

crisis in America. It is the leading cause of death among children and adolescents.

The common thread here is clear: guns and the ease with which they can be attained.

We can stop this. We can choose another path.

In New York, following the Sandy Hook and Tops Supermarket shootings, we acted. We put in place strong red flag laws and banned high-capacity magazines and assault rifles. We made it possible to sue gun manufacturers for the damage caused by the weapons they produce that flood our streets. We created new grant programs for law enforcement to implement problem-oriented policing, using tactics like hot spots policing, street outreach, and crime prevention through environmental design, all adding up to a more targeted and effective approach to preventing gun violence.

To address mental health's role in gun violence, we made a record \$1 billion investment in mental health services.

These actions work.

As of this month, police departments participating in the State's Gun Involved Violence Elimination initiative saw a 28 percent decrease in shooting incidents resulting in injuries in the first 5 months of the year, but those laws won't save lives across our country. They won't stop guns from coming into New York.

We need Congress to act. At a time when we have the Supreme Court nitpicking whether a gun with a bump stock is a machine gun, like the one used in Las Vegas to shoot 90 rounds in 10 seconds, we need Congress to act.

When you can't send your kid to school, your loved one to the grocery store, or simply sit outside without fear of gun violence, we need Congress to act.

That means universal background checks, reinstating the assault weapons ban, banning bump stocks, military-grade body armor, and high-capacity magazines.

Repealing the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act, which gives near-blanket civil suit immunity to gun manufacturers. And, yes, robustly funding mental health resources.

Nobody is coming after the Second Amendment. We are simply trying to save our kids' lives.

As a parent and as a community member who has been to far too many funerals due to gun violence, I implore my colleagues to work with us to pass these policies and make this country safer.

Mrs. MCBATH. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for their commitment to their communities and for the safety of this Nation. I yield back the balance of my time.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois (at the request of Mr. JEFFRIES) for today on account of travel delay.

#### ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Kevin F. McCumber, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly an enrolled bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 4581. An act to amend title V of the Social Security Act to support stillbirth prevention and research, and for other purposes.

#### SENATE ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The Speaker announced his signature to an enrolled bill of the Senate of the following title:

S. 138.—An act to amend the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002 to modify certain provisions of that Act.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. MCBATH. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 49 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until Wednesday, June 26, 2024, at 9 a.m.

#### OATH OF OFFICE MEMBERS, RESIDENT COMMISSIONER, AND DELEGATES

The oath of office required by the sixth article of the Constitution of the United States, and as provided by section 2 of the act of May 13, 1884 (23 Stat. 22), to be administered to Members, Resident Commissioner, and Delegates of the House of Representatives, the text of which is carried in 5 U.S.C. 3331:

"I, AB, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God."

has been subscribed to in person and filed in duplicate with the Clerk of the House of Representatives by the following Member of the 118th Congress, pursuant to the provisions of 2 U.S.C. 25:

MICHAEL A. RULLI, Sixth District of Ohio.

#### EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

EC-4599. A letter from the OSD Federal Register Liaison Officer, Office of the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting